

# NEWSRelease

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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**Bureau of Land Management News Release  
For Immediate Release**

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**BLM**  
Vale District Office

## **Help Needed for Trail Center Celebration of Homestead Act**

**BAKER CITY, Ore.** – This year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Homestead Act, the 1862 law that enabled thousands of settlers to move west and claim 160 acres of land. The impact and legacy of homesteading will be commemorated in a special exhibit and several programs at the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center (NHOTIC). Center staff and Trail Tender volunteers are seeking assistance from the community to add local stories to the planned activities.

Trail Center plans include a large special exhibit “Home Sweet Homestead,” about how homesteading impacted settlement of eastern Oregon, migration via the Oregon Trail, and the culture of homesteading that has become part of American western heritage. The exhibit will run from June 7 to September 3, 2012, and include a “Land Office” staffed by an interpreter so visitors can re-enact the process of filing a land claim. The exhibit is to include specific stories of homesteads in eastern Oregon, and Trail Center staff seeks families with artifacts, photographs or documents that can be used in the exhibit, or stories that can be recorded to include on text panels.

Stories are also needed for programs being prepared by living history interpreters. Several Trail Tender volunteers have recently completed up to 80 hours of training to hone their skills and become certified by the National Association of Interpretation. They are now preparing re-enactment programs about life on homesteads, based on real experiences of homesteaders. They wish to create additional demonstrations related to homesteading craft skills and surveying, to be presented in the Leo Adler Theater and at the wagon encampment throughout the summer of 2012. Additional volunteer re-enactors are needed to help staff the exhibit’s Land Office, to provide interpretation in the exhibit, or to help with the programs in the Theater.

Trail Tenders provides training for new volunteer interpreters in presentation techniques and researching and writing programs. If you have materials to loan, or can assist with volunteering, please contact Kelly Burns or Gypsy McFelter at NHOTIC by calling (541) 523-1843 or e-mail [BLM\\_OR\\_NH\\_Mail@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_OR_NH_Mail@blm.gov).

The Trail Center is also hosting a traveling exhibit from the National Park Service Homestead National Monument, June 17 to July 7. Programs are in the works to help visitors learn about the wealth of information and archive of homesteading documents available online through the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM evolved from the General Land Office which started in 1812, and managed the survey and disposition of millions of acres of land under the Homestead Act.

The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center, operated by the BLM, is located five miles east of Baker City, Oregon, on Highway 86. Take Exit 302 from I-84. The Interpretive Center is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily; Thursday-Sunday through February 12, daily thereafter. Admission for adults is \$5. Seniors are \$3.50. Children 15 and under are free. Federal passes are accepted. Visit [oregontrail.blm.gov](http://oregontrail.blm.gov) for more information about the Interpretive Center, or call (541) 523-1843 for updates on programs and events. For information on this and other activities in Baker County, Oregon, call 1 (800) 523-1235.

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